

Where Hudson Stood in New York

By ARTHUR E. SCOTT.

HERE is probably not a busier thoroughfare in the world than New York city's Broadway, yet within a stone's throw of the upper part of it there still stands a bit of virgin forest which possesses historic interest relating to a period over three centuries ago. So far, this little spot, which has not even a name remains in its pristine beauty, absolutely untouched or spoiled by any work of man, beyond a few trails which have been worn by visitors in the course of time.

Those who desire to make the trip may take either a Broadway surface car or the West Side subway to 207th street, and thence walk west. Huge modern apartment houses may be seen on the way, but in a few minutes the visitor is facing the small forest, set on a hill. Skirting the edge, he comes to an inlet of the Harlem River on his right, along the shore of which numerous houseboats are moored, providing pleasant residences for a large part of the year, as do also the few simple little cottages that have been erected on the bank.

A Stretch of Oyster Shells.

After passing these, the visitor comes to a stretch of ground which at once attracts attention by its white, shelly appearance. At a short distance it would seem that white gravel had been carefully spread over the ground. Closer examination, however, shows that the place is covered with broken oyster shells, the remnants of an Indian encampment which history tells us existed here over three centuries ago. The extreme hardness of these shells, although trampled underfoot for hundreds of years, renders them practically indestructible.

There bubbles from the adjacent hillside a spring of clear, cold water that no doubt supplied the ancient encampment, and which now serves the same purpose for the residents in the little cottages and the houseboats.

In the midst of this shell-strewn expanse, surrounded by a high iron fence, stands a huge tulip tree, towering aloft in quiet dignity as though guarding sacred memories of the past. The trunk of this stately tree had become partially de-



The tree that marks the site where the Dutch explorer probably landed in 1609.

cayed, but the hollow space was filled in with cement, the vigor of the tree being thus preserved.

The smooth outer surface of this cement filling now bears the following inscription:

"Tulip Tree. Liriodendron Tulipifera. Circumference 19 feet. Height 123 feet.

Hendrick Hudson entered this inlet in 1609 and may have met the Indians here who used this place for a camp as shown by the quantities of old

broken oyster shells around this tree and near by.

"This tree was thoroughly repaired and the fence erected around it, October, 1912."

Given the fact of an Indian encampment here, and that Hendrick Hudson with his sailors entered this inlet in the Half Moon on his voyage of discovery in 1609, it is more than probable, in fact, almost certain, that the celebrated explorer stood on the spot where the giant tulip tree now casts its shade.

The Man Who Couldn't Come Back

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cause her name was Brush but because she was brushed. Understand? White stock tinged by negro blood. Brushed they call them. Lots of them here in the Bahamas. A little difference though. In Nassau, for instance, you'll find white families with strains of negro blood. They brushed, as we call it, but somehow or other they cling to their white traditions and are willing to fight at the drop of the hat if the brushing is made a subject of conversation.

"But Lizzie Brush had cast her lot, so to speak, with the folks whose blood had brushed her. A beautiful woman, sir, a beautiful woman. But about the sick woman. Sarah, she was called. She wasn't dying any more than you are this minute. Of course I didn't know what did all her, but I was keen enough to see that the minute I had come in the shack she began to perk up.

"Lizzie says to me: 'Thank God' and all I can say to her was 'Me too, ma'am.' I was that impressed with her. She wants to kiss my hand she is so glad and I learn that the word has gone over the islands that I am a great surgeon who knows white folks' medicine and Obi, too. The Obi women or witch doctors had tried their sorcery on Sarah. They had dosed her with cocoanut oil and beeswax. They had poulticed her with boiled pepper grass and seaweed. They had weaved spells round her and blistered her with hot pebbles. God know's what was wrong with her, but I decided that here was my opportunity.

"I took a little salt water on my hand, rubbed my hand upon the trunk of a Royal Ponciana. With the same hand I massaged the woman's head and, believe it or not, she commences to sing."

Doc Lysander hummed a few bars in a foggy barytone.

"The old woman gets better that night," mused the doc. "Next day she's at work again. Here? Believe me, New Yorker, I was. Gosh, that was twenty years ago. Since then—shucks. Why I've cured hundreds of niggers who only thought they were sick. Auto-suggestion, that's all it is. Old stuff. The best of 'em use it—and charge big prices for it at that."

It wasn't until the next evening that Doc Lysander told me the rest of the story. The old boy drank incredible quantities of rum punch before launching upon the second part of his narrative. And the punch had no noticeable effect upon him. Liverpool Minus was present. I hadn't met the Doc's wife and children yet. He had told me to wait and keep my mouth shut.

"Liverpool," roared the Doc, "you sit there on the stoop and listen to me tell the gentleman about the night we scared the Government. You were there, Liverpool, and you know things I don't."

Nobody could have been more impressed or impressive than Liverpool. Importantly he squatted at the far end of the piazza and began nodding emphatic assent the moment Doc Lysander resumed.

"Y'see," said the Doc, "like all successful and popular men I was due for trouble. All the niggers in these islands got to know me. They trusted me.

"When I came to the Bahamas there was one white doctor. Good enough doctor as far as that goes, but he was full of the pride of race. If a nigger got sick the doctor, if he was called in, did what he could for the patient, charging a few shillings and doing his work well. But he was above the natives—sort of patronized them, y'see, and never got their confidence.

"Now I admit I was no doctor. But I knew these black folks and they knew me. They knew I knew how to help them and they trusted me. If a black boy or black girl didn't have a shilling to pay for treatment it was nothing to me. I took it if it was offered or asked for it if I knew it was there, but all things considered I let the money question slide. Good business, too, because they always came across sooner or later as you would see if you looked at my account in the Royal Bank. And besides I lived like a king. If I wanted something I dropped a hint and if it was in the islands it was on the table by the time I got home.

"In time another doctor came to Nassau. That made two. Then one of the local white boys came home from an English college with a diploma and a medicine case. That made three. Likewise that made trouble for Doc Lysander. There sat three college doctors doing no business and here sat Doc Lysander, a medicine show doctor, healing the sick and succoring the halt, the lame and the blind right and left.

"Well I can't blame 'em for getting a little sore. As I've said, you got to get a little money to live on even here in Nassau. But they go about it wrong. They see me, a medicine man, doing all the doctor business and don't figure how I get away with it. They forget that 90 per cent. of my medicine is faith and the other 10 a mixture of miracle and knowledge of human nature.

"So what do they do but go to the Governor.

"Look here," says they, 'this is an outrage. Here's a man with no college diploma taking the business away from us regular doctors. It's a shame.'

"I think so, too," agrees the Governor,

or words to that effect. 'What will we do about it?'

"This," says they, 'Issue an order that this Doc Lysander, as he calls himself, shall do no more business under penalty of the law.'

"Sure," says the Governor, 'but what law?'

"The law of the British Empire," they say, 'which says that no man who is not a registered physician can treat the symptoms and ailments of a subject of his Majesty the King.'

"That's easy," says the Governor, 'give me a pen.'

"Well, the result is that I'm ordered to quit. The order goes further and I'm told that one more cure from me and I'll have to vamoose. I think it over and while I'm so engaged Liverpool Minus here comes in and says that Holcomb Brewster, a black man, is rolling around Grant's Town with a pain in his insides. The cry of the distressed has never found a deaf ear on the person of Doc Lysander, and I take and go to Holcomb Brewster. Ain't it so, Liverpool?"

"Boss man," cried Liverpool, "'tis so."

"I make a few passes and Holcomb Brewster hasn't any more pain than his grandfather, who's been dead thirty years. But those few passes transferred Holcomb's pains to the Governor.

"See here, Mister Lysander," says he with accent on the mister, 'you've got to quit. Science is science and men of science have decreed that you're a fake and will have to quit. Now get your stuff together and put it beside yourself on an outgoing boat.'

"Governor," says I, in my politest tones, 'it ain't for me to say you ain't right. No, sir, it ain't for me. We shall see what the morrow brings forth.'

"I use the Biblical language to the Governor like I do to the natives, y' see, but the Governor didn't get onto me.

"I'm hoping," says he, 'that the morrow don't bring any trouble forth for you. And it won't if you obey and let a boat take you hence.'

Doc Lysander turned to Liverpool Minus, who was nodding vigorously.

"Liverpool," he demanded, 'what did we do?'

"Boss man," replied Liverpool, "we laid it 'fore the people."

"By gosh," cried Doc, "he's right! Have a drag of this punch. Here's looking at you, New Yorker. Dawgone!"

The Doc drank deeply.

"It was a solemn referendum," he said. "I and Liverpool here went out that evening to ask the natives for advice. In fact, I made a speech. No secrecy about it. The native police were there. Three thousand black folks gathered around, and I asked them what they wanted, me or the college doctors.

"Children," says I to them, 'I got to go. No, there ain't no use crying; I got to go. The Governor says that I am a bad medicine man and that I hurt you? He says that the doctors in the high society in Nassau aim to do all the curing that you need. So I'm going, children, and I ask you to be sure to be good to the Nassau doctors and be sure to have the ten shillings in your hand before you call on them to cure you, because they can't work good without you got ten shillings in your hand.

"And, children, I went on, 'be good and don't be too anxious to get well too fast, because, as the Governor says, these men of science take time and do things their own way and don't like crying or weeping or parades at funerals or anything like that. Don't forget old Doc Lysander, who won't forget you and who grieves to be departing. They are three and Doc Lysander is one. One cannot stand up to three, and God bless you, my children.'

"And then I leave 'em to think it all over. Liverpool Minus here makes a speech. He lays it on strong. Too bad Liverpool never ran for Congress or something. Well, to cut a story to the quick, they march on Government House—three thousand black boys and girls, all friends of Doc Lysander. I stay home packing. Also I was winking my eye.

"It's about 10 o'clock at night and the boys are carrying torches. They are singing hymns and now and then they give three cheers for old Doc Lysander. They are met at the gates of Government House wall by the soldiers who are black like them and they began letting the Governor know they're there.

"We want our Doc Lysander," they yell.

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